

Dean's Introduction

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In this age of unprecedented musical egalitarianism, musicians move with conceptual and technical fluidity from one language to another—from classical to jazz, to high-tech and interactive, to improvisation and hybrid cultural forms, to the experimental and the unpredictable. Today's young musicians create in, and draw inspiration from, any and all of the fields of earlier musical development. This unfettered cross-pollination of traditions and influences has given rise to a dense, lush forest of sound: a fertile terrain in which to create and re-create anew.

The School of Music at CalArts offers a similarly productive learning environment optimized for the informed, creative musicmaker. To excel in this environment, young practitioners, regardless of their individual stylistic trajectories, are called on to master a wide range of musical literature and theories, both traditional and new, and acquire the range of professional skills necessary in a rapidly evolving global culture. We fully immerse students at the front lines of their chosen fields and strongly encourage them to take a bold entrepreneurial approach in positioning themselves as unique and highly capable music artists who can create their own career pathways.

The school is especially attuned to the professional and cultural climates in the world of music today. For our students, these include learning to live on the cutting edge, surfing trends with critical acuity, and working with a spectrum of experimental and speculative ideas. Now more than ever, a young artist must aim for a very high level of versatility in order to lay the groundwork for future success: He or she needs to have the ability to move among musical styles and, increasingly, instruments and media; to work in a variety of interdisciplinary situations; and to develop advanced writing, speaking, playing, teaching, technological and creative skills. Our program curricula help students to cultivate a far-ranging musical acumen while at the same time providing specialized training best suited for meeting each student's individualized goals. We also focus on the development of intellectual and critical abilities so that each artist can best contextualize his or her distinctive work within broader aesthetic and cultural settings—and effectively project that work out into the world.

Our community of musicmakers represents the highest standards in musical knowledge and skill, creativity, resourcefulness, strong individual initiative and tenacity. These qualities also spell out the formula for the success of our students: the composers, performers and producers who will shape the musical landscape of tomorrow.